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THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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Oiled Greater Scaup and Surf Scoters. Scaups and scoters were particularly hard-hit by the spill. Heavily oiled birds like these were often found onshore.

Golden Gate Audubon Responds Quickly to Oil Spill

The incident was a disaster for birds and other Bay Area wildlife. On the morning of November 7, more than 58,000 gallons of heavy bunker oil gushed into San Francisco Bay after the *Cosco Busan*, a 900-foot container ship, crashed into one of the towers of the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge. The currents and tide carried the toxic oil throughout the bay, and as far as Point Reyes, fouling hundreds of acres of shoreline. Birds ingested the oil when they preened, trying in vain to remove it, and eventually became sick and died. Others lost their feathers' thermal protection and succumbed to hypothermia.

In the face of this disaster, Golden Gate Audubon did not stand idle. Our staff and volunteers responded immediately to assist in the rescue of as many birds as possible.

Within 24 hours of the oil spill, the first Golden Gate Audubon volunteer monitoring teams began reporting oiled birds and other wildlife to the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN). Within 36 hours, we had developed a comprehensive plan to canvass nearly every accessible area of the Central Bay from the Pacific Ocean to the southern bayside waterfront in San Francisco and from Point Pinole north of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge south to the Oakland International Airport in

OIL SPILL continued on back cover

Disaster Highlights GGA's Critical Role

Last November, San Francisco Bay experienced its worst environmental disaster in decades when the *Cosco Busan* dumped 58,000 gallons of fuel oil into the bay. The devastation has been well reported and was experienced firsthand by many Golden Gate Audubon members: within the initial few weeks, more than 1,000 oiled birds were recovered alive, of which roughly half died; more than 1,500 birds were recovered dead; and oil washed up on San Francisco beaches and sullied such pristine habitats as the north Richmond shoreline and Richardson Bay. Experts estimate that as many as 15,000 birds may have died in the spill, and that as many as 25,000 to 50,000 were oiled to some degree.

If there was a bright spot in this disaster, it was the outpouring of community concern for our fragile environment. I am proud to say that Golden Gate Audubon was at the leading edge of the community action: our volunteers and staff responded immediately to the emergency, freely giving their extensive time and talents. Moreover, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers played a critical role in the regional efforts due to our reputation as a knowledgeable, science-based organization. We were able to partner with key agencies to gain access to otherwise restricted areas of the shoreline, allowing us to identify many more oiled birds in need of

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets the last Monday of every month (except August and December) at 7:30 p.m. in the chapter office in Berkeley.

The Gull is published nine times per year by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The deadline for submissions is five weeks prior to the month of publication. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

Design and layout e.g. communications

GGA'S CRITICAL ROLE from page 1

assistance. Wildlife agencies particularly valued our monitoring because they knew they could rely on data from Golden Gate Audubon volunteers. Due to our rapid action, we were one of seven local groups honored by the San Francisco Foundation with an emergency grant to assist us in responding to the spill.

Our collective response to the oil spill underscores the vital role that Golden Gate Audubon plays in protecting the Bay Area environment and its wildlife. We strive to address the most critical threats to local birds and other wildlife and their habitats—and to do so strategically and effectively, deploying not only our staff but our hundreds of talented and visionary volunteers. Sometimes local conservation requires quick action. Last November, we again demonstrated our ability to implement a rapid, relevant, effective, science-based response to an environmental crisis. And, once again, volunteers were at the very heart of our response, shaping and carrying out our monitoring efforts.

Whether in times of crisis or in response to the daily challenges of protecting Bay Area wildlife from development, habitat degradation, and other impacts, Golden Gate Audubon is nimble, strategic, efficient, and effective. Our approach is sorely needed, if we are to succeed in protecting healthy populations of Bay Area wildlife for generations to come.

Our success is wholly dependent upon people like you—our members and volunteers. Your support, through your time and your financial contributions, enables us to restore and protect hundreds of acres of habitat each year, increase protections for local wildlife, and inspire hundreds of community members to care for birds and other wildlife.

When we consider the bird species most gravely affected by the *Cosco Busan* spill, such as scaup and scoters, our mission becomes all the more critical. These seabirds are not listed as endangered, but both have experienced significant declines in their populations—upward of 50 percent—over the past several decades. Both also rely heavily on San Francisco Bay as vital wintering habitat, reminding us that local conservation actions taken (or not taken) have global implications.

As we begin 2008, Golden Gate Audubon staff and volunteers are working to compile the oiled bird data we have collected, in the hopes of informing future responses to environmental disasters. We will also continue our efforts to protect critical wildlife habitats around the Bay: the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, the Alameda Wildlife Refuge, San Francisco's southern waterfront, the north Richmond shoreline, and others.

I hope you will continue to support our important work. The easiest way is by renewing your Supporting Membership when you receive your renewal notice this month. Dues from our Supporting Members enable us to maximize the effectiveness of our conservation and education programs—and to respond quickly to urgent threats.

With your support, Golden Gate Audubon can continue to improve the future of Bay Area wildlife. Thank you for being a part of our vital work.

—Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director

Member Nominations to the Board of Directors

Golden Gate Audubon will have two slots open for elected members of the board of directors, with terms beginning on June 16, 2008. Member petitions for nominations must be submitted to the GGA office by March 17, 2008, for the board election to be held on June 15, 2008. Petitions must be signed by a minimum of 100 (maximum of 500) members in good standing, and must include a written agreement by the nominated candidate to serve. Names of candidates will be published in the April 2008 *Gull*, along with ballot forms for members to fill out and send in by June 16. If you wish to submit a petition, call Elizabeth Murdock at 510.843.9912.



CONSERVATION CORNER

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON CONTRIBUTES TO SNOW PLOVER RECOVERY PLAN

Since January 2005, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers have been monitoring the Wildlife Protection Area (WPA) at Crissy Field in San Francisco to document the presence of Western Snowy Plovers. Due largely to these efforts, the "Final Recovery Plan for the Western Snowy Plover," released recently by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, recognizes the WPA as a wintering site for this subspecies, which is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. You can read the full recovery plan for the Western Snowy Plover at www.fws.gov/arcata/es/birds/WSP/plover.html.

As well as counting the species of birds and mammals, volunteers recorded the natural disturbances to wildlife and the disturbances caused by humans and off-leash dogs. Matt Zlatunich, a member of GGA's San Francisco Conservation Committee, compiled a report about the wintering population of plovers from data collected by six volunteers in 2005–06. The findings were presented to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and shared with PRBO Conservation Science.

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area is accepting public comments regarding off-leash dog rules in the Wildlife Protection Area for the Western Snowy Plover. We urge all our members to submit comments in opposition to permitting any off-leash dogs in the WPA at Crissy Field. Comments must be received before January 22. In the subject of your letter, include a reference to RIN 1024–AD53. Mail your letter to Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Fort Mason, Building 201, San Francisco, CA 94123, Attention: Snowy Plover Protection Rule. You can also submit comments online at www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

Saturday, January 12, 9 a.m. – noon

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at the Presidio. Meet at the playground picnic tables, Quail Commons, corner of Battery Caulfield and Washington Boulevard, San Francisco.

Sundays, January 13 and February 10, 9 a.m. – noon

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Help prepare habitat for California Least Terns. Meet at main refuge gate, northwest corner of former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda.

Saturday, January 19, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Native plant propagation for Pier 94. Meet at Literacy for Environmental Justice nursery, 1150 Carroll Avenue, San Francisco.

Saturdays, January 26 and February 23, 9 a.m. – noon

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at Harding Park. Meet at parking lot, corner of Sunset Boulevard and Lake Merced Boulevard.

Saturday, February 2, 1 – 4 p.m.

Improve habitat for birds and other wildlife on coastal dunes and bluffs at Lands End, San Francisco. Meet near East Wash at the golf course access road west of Palace of the Legion of Honor, near where 34th Avenue intersects El Camino del Mar. Wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes. Tools, water, and snacks will be provided. For more information, contact Caroline Christman, 415-385-3065 or cchristman@parksconservancy.org.

Saturday, February 9, 1 – 4 p.m.

Pier 94 wetlands restoration workday. As part of Golden Gate Audubon's ongoing efforts to restore wetlands along San Francisco's southern waterfront, we'll hold a



Charles Denson

Sora at Arrowhead Marsh, Martin Luther King Jr Regional Shoreline, Oakland. The annual survey of rails at Arrowhead Marsh, on November 26, 2007, counted 112 Clapper Rails, 67 Sora, and 17 Virginia Rails. Surveyors also observed 2 Short-eared Owls.

cleanup at Pier 94. Come join us! For more on this successful restoration, see page 10.

For more information on these activities or for directions, contact Jennifer Robinson, Golden Gate Audubon volunteer coordinator, at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org

Whitney Dotson Joins Golden Gate Audubon Board

Community activist Whitney Dotson is the newest member of Golden Gate Audubon's board of directors. In 2001 he founded the North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance, a grassroots group of residents that worked with local environmental groups to save Richmond's Breuner Marsh. Last fall, Whitney was given an Elsie Roemer Conservation Award at Golden Gate Audubon's 90th anniversary celebration. You can see Whitney receiving the award in the December Gull and read more about his accomplishments in the November Gull. We heartily welcome Whitney and look forward to working with him.

Golden Gate Audubon Seeks New Hospitality Coordinator

Longtime hospitality coordinator Susanne Shields is leaving the area, and we need a replacement! If you're interested in working on hospitality at our Speaker Series meetings and other events, please contact Jennifer Robinson at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.

Harry Fuller Migrates North

Late last September, a group of birders gathered at Lands End in San Francisco, as they had been doing every month, to meet long-time Golden Gate Audubon field trip leader Harry Fuller. The trip was as fruitful as always, yielding 51 species, tallied by just as many birders. Among the sightings was the group's first flyover Turkey Vulture, but what made the trip especially notable was that it was Harry's last for Golden Gate Audubon before his move to Ashland, Oregon.

Shortly after the trip, emails expressing praise and regret streamed in—praise for Harry's extensive knowledge of birds, and their habits and habitats, and regrets about the departure of such a devoted and skilled leader and teacher. "What makes birding with Harry so special," Dale Sickles wrote, "is that he imparts this knowledge constantly for the full three hours of the field trip, teaching every moment. Harry also reaches out to everyone from beginners to advanced birders." Jean Palmeter captured the spirit of that September day: "We had a really good trip, as if the birds stopped by to wish him well."

Harry's expertise might suggest that he has been birding since his youth. Although he enjoyed watching the wintering birds at his mother's feeder in the Missouri Ozarks, he began birding seriously in the early 1990s, when he looked around for an alternative to baseball. Frustrated by player strikes and the game's politics, he turned to birding. Choosing a pursuit with a year-



Harry Fuller on his last Golden Gate Audubon field trip.

May Woon

round season was a smart trade. The move was also great for local birders and Golden Gate Audubon. By the mid-1990s Harry was leading Golden Gate Audubon trips to prime birding locations in San Francisco as well as destinations such as the Palo Alto Baylands and Central Valley. Several years later, birders from outside the Bay Area, and outside the U.S., started contacting Harry to take them to Bay Area hot spots.

Having majored in history and built a career as a journalist, Harry naturally began to explore ornithological history, especially the individuals behind the names of birds. The Thayer of Thayer's Gull, the Brewer of Brewer's Blackbird, the Nuttall of Nuttall's Woodpecker—he had to know their stories. As part of his research, he accumulated a library of primary sources on early American birding. Among his prized volumes is an 1830s edition of Alexander Wilson's *American Ornithology* and an edition of Florence Bailey's 1902 *Handbook of Birds of the Western United States*, a precursor to today's compact field guides.

Harry, who describes himself as a "compulsive writer," is driven not only to unearth this information for himself but to share it. About a decade ago, he began writing articles about early ornithologists for *The Gull*. You can find many of them, some revised since original publication, on Harry's robust

website, www.towhee.net, along with other material, including a detailed chronology of Bay Area history in the context of American ornithology over the centuries. He has also taught many classes and lectured on the subject for Golden Gate Audubon's education program and Speaker Series.

When Golden Gate Audubon began making plans in late 2006 to celebrate its 90th anniversary the following year, Harry eagerly volunteered to research and write about local birding and Golden Gate Audubon's activities spanning nine decades. His articles on the Farallon Islands and the changes in Bay Area bird populations, published in *The Gull*, were the perfect way for Golden Gate Audubon to launch its anniversary year.

A few weeks before Harry and his wife, Kate, left San Francisco for Ashland, Harry retired from CNET, where he was executive editor. Happy to be free of meetings and the confines of an office, he is now a full-time birder and guide. Shortly after arriving in Oregon, Harry ticked off a new life bird: Mountain Quail. He is looking forward to adding others to his list and visiting the Bay Area from time to time. You can follow his adventures at Towheeblog, <http://atowhee.wordpress.com>. Wherever he goes, it will be fascinating reading.

—Judith Dunham



May Woon

Around 50 birders showed up for Harry Fuller's final Merrie Way field trip.



SPEAKER SERIES

SARAH REED

COORDINATOR

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m.



Eleanor Briccetti

Magellanic Penguins, one of eight penguin species that photographer Eleanor Briccetti observed in her travels from Argentina to Antarctica.

Antarctica: An Unforgettable Journey

Eleanor Briccetti

Berkeley: Thursday, January 17

Aboard the icebreaker *Ushuaia*, photographer Eleanor Briccetti traveled from Ushuaia, Argentina, to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, and the Antarctic Peninsula. Wildlife abounded on this trip: eight species of penguins, including King, Rockhopper, Chinstrap, and Adelie; Weddell, Fur, and Leopard Seals; Humpback Whales; and Black-browed and Wandering Albatross. Add to these sightings the breathtaking beauty of Antarctica, and you have an unforgettable journey that you will not want to miss! Eleanor's passion for nature photography stems from a love of wildlife and the outdoors. Her favorite haunts include the San Francisco Bay shoreline, the Sacramento and Klamath national wildlife refuges, the Grand Tetons, and the Palouse area of southeast Washington. Eleanor's photographs may be viewed at www.briccettiphot.com.

The Great Blue Herons of Golden Gate Park

Nancy DeStefanis

San Francisco: Tuesday, January 22

Since 1994, 110 chicks have fledged from the Great Blue Heron colony at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park. Nancy DeStefanis of Francisco Nature Education (SFNE), who discovered the nesting birds, will show slides of the 2007 colony and discuss the herons' life cycle, including courtship, breeding, feeding, and fledging. She will also screen a short documentary on SFNE's Heron Watch, a special program staffed by interns with spotting scopes who show the public these charismatic birds and their chicks. The film, *Great Blue Herons in Golden Gate Park*, was produced by Rick Bacigulpi for Northern California Public Television and is set to air through 2008. Nancy is a field ornithologist and the founder and executive director of SFNE, which introduces K-3 students at underserved schools to local wildlife through classroom visits and field trips to Golden Gate Park. For a list of programs, visit www.sfnature.org.

From Deep to Shallow History: The Importance of Habitat Association in the Diversification of African Birds

Dr. Rauri Bowie

Berkeley: Thursday, February 22

Dr. Rauri Bowie is assistant professor of integrative biology and curator of birds at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley, where he studies the evolutionary biology of birds, particularly montane-forest birds in East Africa. Recently he described a new species, the Dark Batis (*Batis crypta*). No more than one or two new avian species are identified annually around the globe, and the vast majority are in Africa and South America. What makes this discovery unusual is that batises are common forest birds and are relatively abundant. Many birders would have previously seen this species, but until a systematic collecting effort was conducted, no one noticed the differences between the Dark Batis and other closely related species. For more details on Dr. Bowie's talk, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org.

From Black Gold to the Black Oystercatcher: Challenges and Opportunities in Alaska

Taldi Walter

San Francisco: Tuesday, February 26

Alaska, our largest state, encompasses more than 600,000 square miles of rugged mountains, grinding glaciers, endless tundra, diverse temperate rainforest, and winding coastlines. From the Spectacled Eider and Yellow-billed Loon of the Arctic to the Black Oystercatcher and the Kittlitz's Murrelet of the southern coastline, Alaska's birdlife diversity is astounding. The state also has an abundance of other iconic wildlife species, many of which are endangered elsewhere.

Taldi Walter of the National Audubon Society (NAS) will present an informative slide show featuring Alaska's wildlife and exploring the state's natural treasures. She will also highlight the imminent and compelling challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Tongass National Forest, and Chugach National Forest, and National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Taldi, who holds a master's in biology, is the Alaska Outreach Coordinator of NAS's Public Policy Office in Washington, DC. She has traveled widely sharing her multimedia presentation focused on Alaska's most stunning natural treasures and its top conservation issues.

Berkeley: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin).

Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm

San Francisco: County Fair Building, SF Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way.

Directions: www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Jewel Lake in Tilden Regional Park

Berkeley

Fridays, January 4 and February 1,
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

Meet at parking lot at north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile stroll through this lush riparian area. Winter at Jewel Lake is a special time with winter residents. The lake level rises with the rains, and winter-visiting water birds should have arrived. Come prepared for muddy paths. Heavy rain cancels.

San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Saturdays, January 5 and February 2,
10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis,
SF Nature Education; Darin Dawson, SF
Botanical Garden Docent, 415.387.9160,
www.sfnature.org

Meet at front gate of garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Cosponsored by Botanical Garden, SF Nature Education, and Golden Gate Audubon.

San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Sundays, January 6 and February 3,
8 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

Meet at front gate of garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of the park has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Fridays, January 18 and February 15,
8 – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Lewis Ellingham; Brian Fitch; Margaret Goodale, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org, 415.554.9600 ext. 16

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We'll enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesdays, January 23 and
February 27, 9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,
hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,
510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Meet at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down lake toward Embarcadero. This month, the lake should be crowded with winter visitors, including Greater and Lesser Scaups, Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, and Horned and Eared Grebes.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking is at boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays.

Arrowhead Marsh

Oakland

Mondays, January 7 and February 4,
9:30 a.m.

Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001,
bob@wingbeats.org

Arrowhead Marsh at the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline is noted for Clapper Rails, Soras, and Virginia Rails. In

the winter, it's a great time to see shorebirds and waterfowl. For the January trip, tide will be high, and rails will be visible.

From I-880 in Oakland, exit at Hegenberger Road and head west. Turn right on Pardee, then left on Swan and right into the park. Continue to parking lot at end of road.

Tilden Regional Park

Berkeley

Sundays, January 13 and February 10,
9 a.m. – noon

Della Dash, 510.558.1907,
birdingal@yahoo.com

Meet at parking lot at north end of Central Park Dr. near Little Farm for a 4-mile hike up to the ridge to take in wintering birds. We will hike a loop, ascending through lush riparian areas, where last year an irruption of Varied Thrush spent the winter. We'll enjoy a 360-degree view from the ridge, along with possibly heavy winds, so dress in layers. We'll proceed down the side of the hills through a more open area. Be prepared for muddy paths. Heavy rain cancels.

Albany Mudflats

Thursday, January 3, 8 – 10:30 a.m.

Emilie Strauss, 510.540.8749

Trip starts early because tide will be good for viewing shorebirds and ducks. Meet at raised platform located on access road to Albany Bulb. Park along road at westernmost end of Buchanan St., on west side of I-80.

Palo Alto Baylands and Mountain View Shoreline

Palo Alto

Saturday, January 12, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Dan Murphy, 415.564.0074,
murphsf@comcast.net

Meet at the duck pond near Baylands Preserve. The wetlands, marshes, and open waters at Palo Alto and Mountain View are among the most easily accessible sites on San Francisco Bay for birders. Levees and boardwalks overlooking the preserves are excellent spots for viewing 60 to 80

species that winter in the South Bay. Wear clothes appropriate for cold, wet weather; the levees can be very muddy. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain will not cancel trip.

From Hwy. 101, exit at Embarcadero Rd. East, just south of Dumbarton Bridge. Stay to right and be careful not to take Oregon Expressway. Drive east over freeway to end of street, turn left, and continue to duck pond. If gate is locked, meet in parking lot immediately to right of gate.

Albany Mudflats

Sunday, January 13, 8 – 10 a.m.

Oliver James, 510.524.7093,
oliverjames91@gmail.com

Meet at raised platform located on access road to Albany Bulb. Park along road at westernmost end of Buchanan St., on west side of I-80. Wintering waterfowl and shorebirds are often abundant along waterfront at this time of year. Bring a scope if you have one. Heavy rain cancels.



Eastshore State Park

Monday, January 21

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233 (no calls after 9:30 p.m.), kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 9 a.m. at El Cerrito Del Norte BART Station or at 9:25 a.m. at end of S. 51st St. in Richmond. There is a spur from the SF Bay Trail to this point. We will bird along SF Bay Trail from Richmond to Emeryville and end at Aquatic Park in Berkeley. Bring bicycle lock, sunscreen, and liquids. Bring lunch or purchase at Seabreeze Market, Berkeley. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Reservations not necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated. Call or email leader for cell phone number.

January 21 is a holiday, but BART is not on holiday schedule. BART schedules: www.transitinfo.org. Bay Trail: <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>. Eastshore State Park: www.eastshorepark.org.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Marin County

Sunday, January 27, 8:30 a.m.

Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936,
rscalf@sonic.net

Meet at Tennessee Cove trailhead for a half-day trip. This 3-mile, round-trip walk will take us through lush riparian habitat. We will be on the lookout for winter-

ing birds. Lunch is optional. Heavy rain cancels.

From San Francisco, take Hwy. 101 north to Marin. Exit on Hwy. 1 toward Mill Valley and Stinson Beach. After about .25 mile, turn left onto Tennessee Valley Rd. Continue 1.5 miles to end of road.

Panoche Valley

San Joaquin County

Sunday, February 3, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Chris Carpenter, 510.547.2201,
cgbirds64@comcast.net

Meet at intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 in Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. From there we will drive east to I-5 south of Los Banos. This trip traverses raptor habitat, which usually produces Golden Eagle and Merlin, plus Mountain Bluebirds, Phainopepla, and Vesper Sparrows. Be sure to fill your gas tank before leaving Hollister. Carpool from Bay Area if possible. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Rain cancels.

California Delta

Friday February 8, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001,
bob@wingbeats.org

Join Dolphin Charters and the boat *Delphinus* for a wonderful birding opportunity in the California Delta. We leave Antioch Marina and cruise east, looking at tule berm islands and over levees for overwintering birds and late-winter nesters such as herons and egrets. We commonly see 75 to 80 species. There is a constantly shifting panorama of partially flooded fields (great for Sandhill Cranes and Tundra Swans) and low vegetation and meadowlike habitat that harbor many more species. Aquatic, land, and marine mammals (river otters, sea lions, harbor seals, coyotes) are also spotted. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress appropriately for Delta winter weather. Boat will leave from and return to Antioch Marina. Trip is limited to 30 participants. Cost is \$80 for Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Members, \$90 for nonmembers. Payment is due Friday, January 25. Reserve by contacting Kristen Bunting, Golden Gate Audubon office manager, 510.843.2222 or ggass@goldengateaudubon.org.

Take I-80 to the Hwy. 4/Hercules exit. Go east on Hwy. 4 (toward Stockton) to L St./Contra Loma exit in Antioch. Turn left on L St. at bottom of off-ramp and

drive straight to marina parking lot. Or, take Hwy. 24 to Walnut Creek, then I 680 north. In Pleasant Hill, take Hwy. 242 (Antioch/Pittsburg) to Hwy. 4, going east to Antioch.

Eastshore State Park and Aquatic Park

Monday, February 18, 8:30 a.m.

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233 (no calls after 9:30 p.m.), kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at southernmost pond of Aquatic Park, Bay and Potter Sts., in Berkeley. We will bird most of Eastshore State Park, via SF Bay Trail, from Emeryville to Richmond. Bring bicycle lock, sunscreen, and liquids. Bring lunch or purchase at Richmond Marina Bay, Point Isabel Regional Shoreline, or Seabreeze Market, Berkeley. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Call or email leader for cell phone number.

Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations are recommended. BART is on holiday schedule. BART schedules: www.transitinfo.org. SF Bay Trail: <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>. Eastshore State Park: www.eastshorepark.org.

Redwood Regional Park

Contra Costa

Sunday, February 24, 8 a.m. – noon

Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9636,
rscalf@sonic.net

Use Redwood Gate entrance near Redwood Rd. Meet at Canyon Meadow in farthest parking lot at end of road. We will find wintering birds and possibly Varied Thrush, sapsuckers, Townsend's Warblers, and Brown Creepers. Entrance fee is \$5.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Friday, February 29, 9 a.m. – noon

Inge Svoboda, 510.548.4308,
i_svoboda@yahoo.com;
Marilyn Nasatir, 510.845.1029,
mnasatir@berkeley.edu

Meet at Seabreeze Market, corner of University Ave. and Frontage Rd. We'll check out the bayside shoreline (part of the Eastshore State Park) for shorebirds, then we'll cross the footbridge over I-80 and look for ducks, grebes, egrets, shorebirds, and passerines at Aquatic Park. Bring a scope if you have one. Heavy rain cancels.

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8

As of this writing, there may still be space in the winter classes below sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon and held at the Albany Adult School. Register online at www.albany.k12.ca.us/adult/birding.html or by calling 510.559.6580.

Birding By Ear I

Denise Wight

Wednesdays, January 16 – February 6, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, January 19 – February 9, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Birding By Ear II

Denise Wight

Wednesdays, February 27 – March 19, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, March 1 – March 22, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Birds of the Bay Area

Rusty Scalf and Bob Lewis

Wednesdays, January 9 – February 13, plus field trips on the Saturday or Sunday following each class, and one weekend-long trip

Birds and Butterflies—Easy Garden Enchantment

Corinne Greenberg

Tuesdays, January 15 – February 5, 7 – 9 p.m., plus one field trip on Saturday morning, February 9

Plan Ahead for Spring Classes

Golden Gate Audubon's popular natural history classes continue this spring at the Albany Adult School (AAS) and the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA). The AAS quarter starts March 31. Check our website for detailed class descriptions and registration instructions. Remember to register early—many classes fill up and have a waiting list.

- Bay Area Birds (AAS), the ever-popular offering, taught this quarter by Rusty Scalf and Eddie Bartley
- Birding by Ear (AAS), two sessions of classes, with Denise Wight
- Gardening Enchantment for Birds and Butterflies (AAS), with Corinne Greenburg
- Identification of East Bay Wildflowers (AAS), with Lech Naumovich
- North American Owls (OMCA), with Dave Quady

Zen and the Art of Mushroom Hunting at the Oakland Museum

Debbie Viess

Thursday, January 17, 7:30 – 9 p.m., plus one field trip, Saturday, January 19

Register by calling the Golden Gate Audubon office at 510.843.2222.

FIELD TRIPS from page 7

Honey Lake

Lassen County

Saturday–Sunday, March 29–30

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,
davequady@att.net

We'll search Lassen County for Greater Sage-Grouse, Bald Eagles, and other wintering birds of the Eastern Sierra. On previous trips, we have seen more than 70 species, including 20 waterfowl species and 4 woodpecker species. Trip is limited to first 20 participants who sign up with leader; sign-up begins on January 28. Detailed directions will be provided to those confirmed on trip. Lodging is available in Susanville, primitive camping at Honey Lake State Wildlife Area. Plan to bring warm clothing, lunches for both days, and a scope if you have one. Carpooling encouraged.

Palm Springs, Morongo Valley, and Joshua Tree National Park

Thursday–Sunday, April 23 – 26

Emilie Strauss; Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936;
rscalf@sonic.net

This extended trip offers excellent opportunities for viewing desert and oasis birds as well as spring migrants. We expect to see Vermillion Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat, and many desert species, such as Roadrunner, Black-throated Sparrow, and Verdin. Any storm activity to south may result in a migrant fallout, so we'll keep our schedule flexible. Local birders will be consulted. Trip is limited to 15 people. A \$100 deposit is required. Contact Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruth Tobey@earthlink.net, to reserve space. For a complete itinerary, see December 2007 *Gull*.

Yosemite National Park

Friday–Sunday, May 30–June 1

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,
davequady@att.net

The park's lower and middle elevations are alive with singing birds in late May. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of bird life, typically including seven flycatchers (four *Empidonax*), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Trip is limited to first 20 participants who sign up with leader; reservations open up February 25. Past participants have camped at park's Hodgdon Meadow (reservations recommended; campground fills up fast) or stayed in campgrounds or commercial lodgings near Big Oak Flat entrance. Details will be provided to those confirmed on trip. Carpooling encouraged.



November was a dismal month for bird lovers and even worse for birds. Instead of spotting rarities and celebrating highlights, birders focused on rescuing oiled seabirds and lamenting the losses.

LOONS TO DUCKS

Red-necked Grebes maintained their presence in the waters off the Presidio, SF, in Bodega Bay, SON, and at Outer PRNS, MRN (mob). A Nov. 18 pelagic trip to the Farallon Islands, SF, noted a Flesh-footed Shearwater among other pelagic specialties (JCS). A seawatch from Pigeon Pt., SM, on Nov. 3 ID'd a Short-tailed Shearwater riding the updrafts over the waves (RT). On Nov. 2 an Ashy Storm-Petrel made a rare foray into the bay near Hayward's Landing, ALA (BRi).

The Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) that set up housekeeping in mid-Sept. at the DENWR Salt Ponds in Alviso (SCL) remained through at least Nov. 20 (mob). In SF, a drake Harlequin Duck spent the month at Heron's Head Park (DMo; mob) and a 2nd Harley was noted near Mile Rock on the 22nd (PS). A hen Long-tailed Duck chose the protective confines of Ocean Colony in Half Moon Bay, SM, through the 13th (GD; DMo, RW). In MRN, Long-tailed Ducks visited Rodeo Lagoon on Nov. 22-23 (WL) and Tomales Bay on the 28th (DR, PB, LB).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

An immature Northern Goshawk rewarded hawkwatchers and photographers at Hawk Hill, MRN for their patience on Nov. 2 (DMe). On the 24th, an elusive Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) took flight over the marsh near Bivalve on Highway 1, north of Pt. Reyes Station, MRN (RS). A Pacific Golden-Plover remained at Outer PRNS, MRN, through the 25th (RS). The fields in the vicinity of Robinson and Flannery Roads, SOL, remain the favored winter destination for 200+ Mountain Plovers, which arrived by Nov. 2 (TC; DeH, DaH). A Wandering Tattler worked the rock jetty at Princeton Harbor, SM, on the



Tropical Kingbird at the Hayward Regional Shoreline, photographed by Alex Navarro on December 2, 2007

21st (DMo, PMC, SMo). The same locale hosted a Rock Sandpiper Nov. 14-17 (SMA; MD, EG) and a Ruff on the 19th (GC).

On Nov. 25-26, an unusual pale gull at Kennedy Park duck pond in NAP, NAP, was identified as a probable "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*) (LK, MB). A 4th cycle Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) rejoined the Half Moon Bay gull flock, where it was seen on the 25th at Upper Crystal Springs Res., SM (ADM). A 1st year Sabine's Gull lingered a week at Alviso salt pond A13, SCL, beginning the 3rd (MM, AR, MR; mob).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A Long-eared Owl returned on the 26th to Ed Levin CP, SCL (FV, BRe). Short-eared Owls celebrated Vespers at 8 salt marsh and coastal prairie locales around the Bay Area beginning the 5th (mob). A Northern Saw-

whet Owl was banded at the CCFS, SCL, on the 3rd (DWo). A probable Yellow-bellied Sapsucker made a brief appearance at Jewel L., ALA, on the 2nd (PB). A Tropical Kingbird drew birders to the Winton Ave. entrance to Hayward RS, ALA, beginning the 13th (PDr; mob). A 2nd Tropical Kingbird was reported on the 21st at Martin Luther King Jr. RP, Oakland, ALA (BG). A Townsend's Solitaire rewarded climbers near the summit of Mt. St. Helena, SON, on the 18th (AW).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Fall warbler migration left behind a Lucy's Warbler at Coyote Pt. Yacht Club, SM, on the 3rd (GC, CDL, KO) and a Black-and-white Warbler at L. Cunningham Park, SCL, Nov. 1-2 (JPa; TG). A "brilliant bright red male" Summer Tanager graced the forest canopy of GGP, SF on the 18th (PM). The region's marshes provided entertaining sparrow-watching, starting with a Vesper Sparrow on the 7th at Shorebird Marsh in Corte Madera, MRN (BL). High tide flushed a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow Nov. 25-28 at Palo Alto Baylands, SCL (MD, BC, KS, SMe; mob). Back on higher ground, 2 Lapland Longspurs joined a pipit flock at Bayfront Park in Menlo Park, SM, Nov. 2-7 (mob). Killdeer were the preferred companions for the Lapland Longspur at the Buffalo Paddocks in GGP, SF, on the 11th (HF, LG; mob). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were located on the 18th along the Estero Trail at PRNS, MRN (DWi) and on the 24th at Stinson Beach, MRN (RS).

See Birding Resources at www.goldengateadubirding.com/birding.html for complete sightings list.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Brent Plater for assistance in compiling data.

Abbreviations for Observers: ADM, Al DeMartini; AE, Al Eisner; AJ, Al Jaramillo; AR, Alma Rogers; ARP, Adam R. Paul; AW, Alar Wright; BC, Brian Christman; BG, Brad Graham; BL, Bill Lenarz; BRe, Bob Reiling; BRi, Bob Richmond; CDL, Calvin D. Lou; DaH, David Hamilton; DeH, Denise Hamilton; DMe, Dennis Meehan; DMo, Dominik Mosur; DR, Don Reinberg; DWi, Dave Wimpfheimer; DWo, Debbie Wong; EG, Eric Goodill; FV, Frank Vanslager; GC, George Chrisman; GD, Gary Deghi; HF, Harry Fuller; JCS, Juan-Carlos Solis; JK, John Klobas; JPa, Janna Pauser; JPu, Julia Putman; KO, Kris Olson; KS, Ken Schneider; KW, Kristi Whitfield; LB, Len Blumin; LG, Laurie Graham; LK, Larry Kent; MB, Murray Berner; MD, Matthew Dodder; MM, Mike Mammoser; MR, Mike Rogers; PB, Patti Blumin; PDo, Peggy Don; PDr, Peter Dramer; PM, Peter Metropulos; PMC, Pat McCulloch; PR, Phila Rogers; PS, Paul Saraceni; RK, Roland Kenner; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; RW, Ron Wolf; SK, Sarah Klobas; SMA, Sean McAllister; SMe, Sonny Mencher; SMO, Sebastian Mosur; TC, Terry Colborn; TG, Tom Grey; WL, William Legge

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; IMP, Imperial; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRBO, Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Pt., Point, Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant



Students from Lowell High School working at Harding Park during Golden Gate Audubon's Restore-A-Thon.

Noreen Weeden/www.naturetrip.com

Golden Gate Volunteers Restore Habitat in San Francisco

At the same time that Golden Gate Audubon volunteers were combing the Central Bay shoreline searching for birds to be rescued from the oil spill, dozens more volunteers were taking part in two major habitat restoration projects in San Francisco.

On Saturday, November 10, a total of 60 hardworking volunteers, including students from Drew and Lowell high schools in San Francisco, participated in Golden Gate Audubon's annual Restore-A-Thon at the Presidio and Harding Park. The volunteers spent a gray, drizzly morning weeding out invasive species, preparing planting sites, and digging in some 500 native seedlings. Just as they completed their work, a hard rain arrived, which was perfect for helping the young plants take root. The hungry and wet volunteers retreated to their cars for a tailgate picnic lunch, with food generously provided by House of Bagels and Whole Foods Market. Leaders for the day were Damien Raffa, natural resources specialist from the Presidio Trust, and Matt Zlatunich, longtime Golden Gate Audubon volunteer at the Presidio, and Eli Saddler and Jennifer Robinson of Golden Gate Audubon at Harding Park. The plants were donated by San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department and by the Presidio Trust.

A week later, on Saturday, November 17, approximately 40 more Golden Gate Audubon volunteers were hard at work cleaning out weeds and other debris and planting 250 natives at Pier 94, a now thriving wetland on San Francisco's southern waterfront. The volunteers included 22 members of Tau Beta Pi, an engineering honor society from UC Berkeley, as well as employees of Norcal Waste

Systems Inc. and Golden Gate Audubon members. These hardy volunteers removed a total of 1,140 pounds of non-native plants, compostable and recyclable materials, and waste.

Golden Gate Audubon is grateful to Hanson Aggregates, which provided refreshments for the Pier 94 volunteers, in addition to use of a water truck to spray the newly planted natives; the Port of San Francisco for facilities; Literacy for Environmental Justice for supplying the plants and tools; and Norcal/Sunset Scavenger for providing a truck to haul away the compostable and recyclable materials. Volunteer Mark Bartlett locally cultivated and donated native Bee Plants for the second year in a row, and Peter Baye, coastal plant ecologist, gave professional recommendations on weeding and planting the site.



Drew High School students planting natives at the Presidio.

Lee Karney



Volunteers removing invasive ice plants from a Presidio hillside.



Members of Tau Beta Pi working at Pier 94.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

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GRANTS

The San Francisco Foundation: Cosco Busan Oil Spill Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant

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Whole Foods

OIL SPILL from page 1

the East Bay. Two days after the spill, more than 100 Golden Gate Audubon volunteers were on the ground, identifying oiled birds for rescue and transporting them to rescue centers. Within two weeks, more than 200 volunteer monitors organized by Golden Gate Audubon—including groups from San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and PG&E and naturalists from the East Bay Regional Park District—had helped identify more than 3,000 birds in need of rescue. By the end of November, more than 1,000 birds had been cleaned or released.

Our monitoring protocol, developed by Noreen Weeden, chair of GGA's San Francisco Conservation Committee, and Eddie Bartley, GGA field trip leader and class instructor, divided the Central Bay shoreline into 15 segments. Each day, a team of volunteers monitored each segment, examined it for oiled birds, and reported the data to the Oiled Wildlife Care Network. The OWCN then coordinated rescue of the injured birds. Monitors recorded their data and sent their data sheets, along with any photographs, to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The OWCN and other rescue agencies immediately recognized the value of GGA's monitoring program, as it allowed rescuers to concentrate their efforts and pinpoint birds' locations and identities—thanks in large part to our volunteers' in-depth knowledge of local species.

The oil spill hit hardest parts of Marin

County, Angel Island, Alcatraz Island, Ocean Beach in San Francisco, and the shoreline between the Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline and the Emeryville Marina in the East Bay. Within just days of the disaster, volunteers had reported thousands of oiled shorebirds and diving ducks in these areas. The species most affected were scoters, grebes, scaups, and cormorants, though the spill appeared to impact several threatened and endangered species as well, such as California Clapper Rails, Western Snowy Plovers, and Brown Pelicans. Fortunately, many locations where these birds are most common—including San Francisco's bay shoreline, Alameda, and Oakland's Lake Merritt and Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline—were spared the brunt of the spill's reach.

Golden Gate Audubon staff members and volunteers are now compiling the data and planning to write a report on birds injured by the oil spill. In addition to the rescued birds, as of the end of November, more than 1,500 birds had been recovered dead, indicating that the spill may have killed up to 15,000 birds, as experts estimate that each recovered bird represents at least five and as many as 10 unseen deaths. Assessments of the spill's impact by Golden Gate Audubon, other local nonprofits, and federal, state, and local agencies will continue for many more months.

by Michael C. Martin

Birding with Joe Morlan

Joe Morlan's classes, endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon, start in February. All meet at Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore Street, 7–9:15 p.m. Optional field trips may be arranged on weekends. For more information, call 415.561.1860. Register at www.evolvevww.com/ce.ccsf

Field Ornithology I

Tuesdays. Part A (EA101):

February 5 – March 18;

Part B (EA105): April 1 – May 13

The basic field skills, bird ecology, biology, evolution, and behavior.

Field Ornithology II

Wednesdays. Part A (EA110):

February 6 – March 19;

Part B (EA115): April 2 – May 14

Water birds, including phalaropes, gulls, and terns.

Field Ornithology III

Thursdays. Part A (EA120):

February 7 – March 20;

Part B (EA125): April 3 – May 15

Land birds including warblers, tanagers, and sparrows.

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